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DELHI COURT TO FRAME CHARGES AGAINST BRIJ BHUSHAN SINGH

The BJP MP and former chief of the Wrestling Federation of India is an accused in a sexual harassment case filed by female wrestlers

'SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AGAINST ACCUSED'

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Priyanka Rajpoot ordered framing of charges against Singh under sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty), 354A (sexual harassment), and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC. "There is sufficient evidence to frame charges against the accused," the judge said in her order on Friday

CO-ACCUSED TOMAR ALSO TO BE CHARGED

- Six wrestlers had filed complaint against Singh and the Delhi Police filed the chargesheet on June 15. The court, however, discharged Singh in a complaint filed by the sixth victim, citing lack of evidence to support the charges
- The court also ordered framing of charges against co-accused and ex-WFI assistant secretary Vinod Tomar for the offence of criminal intimidation | P9

May 21

WHEN THE COURT WILL OFFICIALLY FRAME CHARGES AGAINST BRIJ BHUSHAN SINGH

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Kejri gets 21 days to hit campaign trail

SC grants him interim bail till June 1; says it took a holistic and libertarian position in view of general elections

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

IN a major relief to jailed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Supreme Court on Friday granted him interim bail till June 1 to participate in the general election campaigns, while imposing certain conditions on him. He was in Tihar jail since March 21 for alleged money laundering tied to the Delhi excise policy scam.

In its eight-page order, a two-judge bench led by Justice Sanjiv Khanna directed Kejriwal to surrender on June 2.

Hours later, Kejriwal stepped out of Tihar and thanked the judges for their liberal order. "We have to save the country from dictatorship, I will fight with all my might but need the support of 140 crore people," he told the media.

While rejecting the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) stiff opposition to the bail, the court said, "Arvind Kejriwal is the Chief Minister of Delhi and a leader of one of the national parties. No doubt, serious accusations have been made, but he has not been convicted. He does not have any criminal antecedents. He is not a threat to the society. The investigation in the present case has remained pending since August 2022."

While the ED argued that the grant of interim bail would amount to placing politicians in a beneficial position compared to ordinary citizens, the bench said, "courts always take into consideration the peculiarities associated with the person in question and the surrounding circumstances. In fact, to ignore the same would be iniquitous and wrong."

Arvind Kejriwal addresses supporters after coming out of Tihar Jail | EXPRESS

FOUR COMMANDMENTS

1. Kejriwal can't visit the office of the Chief Minister and the Delhi Secretariat
2. Shall not sign official files unless it is required and necessary for obtaining clearance/approval of L-G
3. Kejriwal must not make any comment on his role in the present case
4. CM must not interact with any witness and/or have access to any official files connected with the case

The bench noted that the legality and validity of the arrest itself is under challenge before them and that they are yet to take the call.

"The situation cannot be compared with harvesting of crops or plea to look after business affairs. In this background, once the matter is sub judice and the questions relating to legality of arrest are under consideration, a more holistic and libertarian view is justified, in the background that the 18th Lok Sabha General Elections are being held," the order said.

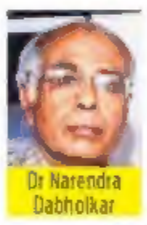
Retired SC judge Madan B Lokur described it as a "good order that can have a large significance at the Centre and Delhi". Another retired judge P K S Baghel termed the order as good for a healthy democracy, adding it would definitely give a good boost to the AAP in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections on May 25 in Delhi.

Justice at last as two sentenced to life for Dabholkar's murder

SUDHIR SURYAWANSHI @ Mumbai

CLOSE to 11 years after rationalist Dr Narendra Dabholkar was shot dead in Pune, a special session court on Friday sentenced two of the accused to life imprisonment while acquitting three others, including alleged key conspirator Dr Virendrasinh Tawde.

All five accused were linked to the Sanatan Sanstha. Apart from Dr Tawde, an ENT surgeon, Mumbai-based lawyer Sanjeev Punalekar and his aide Vikram Bhave were acquitted for lack of evidence. Sachin Andure and Sharad Kalaskar, who allegedly shot dead Dabholkar, were convicted.



Dr Narendra Dabholkar

Rationalist, anti-superstition activist and founder of the Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti, Dr Dabholkar was 67 when he was shot dead by two bike-borne assailants on the VR Shinde bridge in Pune on August 20, 2013. The shocking murder was initially probed by the Pune City Police and was handed over the CBI in 2014.

While Dr Tawade was chargesheeted in September 2016, Andure and Kalaskar were chargesheeted in February 2019. The chargesheeting of Punalekar and Bhave happened in November 2019.

The accused were booked under Indian Penal Code sections 34 (common intention), 120 B (conspiracy), 302 (murder), relevant sections of the Arms Act, and Section 16 (terrorism) of the UAPA.

The court blamed the competent officer's negligence for the failure to prove the charges under UAPA. As for Dr Tawde, the judge said there was ample scope for doubt, the prosecution had failed to convert the suspicion into evidence.

"In the case of Bhave and Punalekar, even if there is scope for suspicion, there is no evidence," the judge said. The charges against Andure and Kalaskar were proved beyond doubt, he added.

EXPRESS READ

EC pulls up Kharge over letter to I.N.D.I.A netas

New Delhi: Taking strong exception to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge writing to leaders of the INDIA bloc over the voter turnout data, the ECI on Friday accused him of obstructing the Lok Sabha elections and trying to push 'a biased narrative' under the guise of seeking clarifications. P9

Rain batters KIA, 17 flights diverted

Bengaluru: Turbulent weather and poor visibility at Kempegowda International Airport on Thursday night led to diversion of 17 flights, three of them international, to Chennai. The flights could not land for an hour from 9.30 pm because of gusty wind and thunderstorms. Terminals 1 and 2 were flooded following heavy rain. P2

FLYING ARROW

Only two centimetres separated the top two throwers in the Doha Diamond League on Friday. Czech Jakub Vadlejch (inset) topped the charts with 88.38m. Olympic and world champion Neeraj Chopra managed 88.36m in his last throw | AP P13

Man kills minor girl, flees with severed head

PRAJNA GR @ Madikeri

A 32-year-old man allegedly murdered a 16-year-old girl and fled with her severed head at Surlabbi village in Madikeri taluk of Kodagu on Thursday night.

She was the only student in Class 10 of Surlabbi Government High School. She secured 50.24% marks in the SSLC exam. The accused has been identified as Monnanda Prakash Onkarappa of Hammiyala village. Sources said Prakash was in love with the minor girl for over a year and wanted to marry her after her Class 10 exam. P5

NIA arrests key accused, harbourer in Nettaru case

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

THE National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday arrested Mustafa Paichar, the main accused in Praveen Nettaru murder case, and his harbourer Mansoor Pasha from Anemahal village in Hassan district.

Nettaru was hacked to death by two bike-borne assailants on July 26, 2022, at Bellare village near Sullia in Dakshina Kannada district.

The killers were allegedly cadres of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI).

Meanwhile, sources said Siraj of Sakleshpur has been arrested for supporting Paichar and Pasha.

The NIA had identified Paichar and another accused, Kodaje Mohammed Sherif, who is absconding, in the sensational murder case as "leaders of the now defunct service teams (of PFI) who were tasked with identifying key targets", and had announced a reward of Rs 7 lakh on information leading to his arrest. P4

Prajwal tapes: Police detain Devaraje Gowda

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru / Hassan

BJP leader and advocate Devaraje Gowda, who had alerted the party leaders about Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna's alleged sexual abuses sometime ago, was detained by Hiriyur police (Chitradurga district) on Friday in connection with a complaint filed against him by a woman on April 1 in Holenarasipur police station.

Holenarasipur police rushed to Hiriyur in the evening to take Gowda into their custody. In her complaint, the woman alleged that she was sexually abused by Gowda at his house when she went there to seek his help in a land dispute case. Before this, Gowda had filed a complaint with Hebbal police in Bengaluru, accusing three people from Holenarasipur of demanding Rs 2 crore from him in a honeytrap case.

Gowda has another case against him registered by Holenarasipur women police on April 30 for allegedly sexually abusing and threatening a woman with dire consequences. A complaint in this regard was filed on April 29. Sources said Gowda allegedly made WhatsApp calls to the woman and sent his nude videos to her. Gowda met her on HN Pura-Mysuru road and abused her for not cooperating with him. Gowda reminded her that he had given her more than Rs 1 lakh in Bengaluru. P4

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